

HEALTH DISPARITIES: THE GENETIC CONTRIBUTION IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

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Since the completion of the Human Genome Project, it has been found that genes and their function play a role in 9 out of 10 of the leading causes of death in the U.S. Some of these causes such as heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes are significantly prevalent in the African American community. African Americans often experience the largest differences in health risks when compared to their White counterparts. This research project will examine how mutated genes and their function, contribute to health disparities in the African American community.

The population for this research project will only include individuals of African ancestry born in the U.S. A brief survey will be conducted to inquire about participants' knowledge of genetics and its influence on disease inheritance. The data collected will be interpreted as a representation of average African Americans' knowledge of genetic influences on disease inheritance. Additionally, data will be obtained from facilities that offer genetic testing services. Specifically, I hope to obtain information on the racial populations who utilize these services, primarily, those with higher occurrences of genetic disorders. Coupled with the survey's data, I will use the testing centers' information to determine whether a correlation exists between the following variables: knowledge of genetics, use of genetic testing services and prevalence of inheritable diseases. I expect a strong correlation between afore mentioned variables. My hypothesis is that this correlation will prove undetected gene mutations when inherited, contribute to health disparities in the African American community.